



**END
VIOLENCE
AT WORK**

UNISON's Violence at Work Charter

**Campaigning for an end to violence at work
in the community sector**



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Background to the Violence at Work Charter

For some years now, it has been recognised that violence towards people working in the community and voluntary sector, including housing associations, is a significant problem – and it is getting worse.

UNISON surveys of our members in the community sector consistently find that almost half had experienced an incident of violence or aggression at work in the previous two years. Data gathered by 'Inside Housing' has also shown that violence and verbal abuse of workers from housing associations is an acute problem. UNISON believes violence must not be seen as "part of the job".

These appalling incidents include staff being punched, pushed and kicked. Staff have also been threatened with weapons and held against their will. UNISON reps in the sector tell us they are seeing more and more examples of violence against members who are simply doing their jobs.

UNISON wants to work with employers to put in place a basic level of monitoring, support, safeguards and training. These are measures that every employer should be able to deliver. We are asking only that charities and housing associations take their duty of care to staff seriously.

In common with the Health and Safety Executive, UNISON defines violence at work as "Any incident in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work."

Meeting these standards will show the workforce and the employers' stakeholders that organisations founded on the principles of care and social responsibility are serious about protecting their staff.

Additionally, meeting the standards shows the organisation is prepared to put in place measures that prevent people they are responsible for from being assaulted as they carry out their work.

The Violence at Work Charter standards

To qualify for the UNISON Violence At Work Charter mark, employers must meet the following standards:

1. The employer has a written violence and aggression at work policy, which is available to all staff. The policy should also cover lone working.
2. Responsibility for implementing these policies lies with a senior manager.
3. Measures are taken to reduce staff working in isolated buildings, offices or other work areas to a minimum.
4. Staff are encouraged to report all violent incidents and they are told how to do this.
5. The employer collects and monitors data on violent incidents on a regular and ongoing basis.
6. Where they are in place, union safety reps are able to access this data and are consulted on solutions to issues relating to violence in the workplace.
7. Thorough risk assessments are conducted for staff placed in vulnerable situations.
8. The employer has support pathways in place for staff who are victims of violence at work, so that they know where to turn for advice and support.
9. Training to ensure staff are aware of the appropriate way to deal with threatening situations.
10. Where appropriate, independent counselling services are available to staff who are the victims of violence at work.



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Implementation of the Violence at Work Charter

UNISON will approach all major employers in the community and voluntary sector and ask them to sign up to the charter.

All employers seeking to sign up will be asked for evidence of their compliance with the 10 points prior to signing.

Organisations which need to make changes to their practices will be given one year to make those changes and state, at the time of signing, what their plan is to deliver on all 10 points.

To find out more about UNISON's Violence at Work Charter, contact UNISON's Community national officer Gavin Edwards at g.edwards@unison.co.uk

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